



KITSAP COUNTY COUNCIL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Commissioners' Office, 614 Division Street, MS-4, Port Orchard, WA 98366

July 18, 2023

Kitsap County Community Members, Central Kitsap School Board Members, Superintendent, and Klahowya Secondary School Administrators:

Council for Human Rights

Dionne Deschenne, Chair

Christina Barone

Erin Lanum

Judy Friesem

Elizabeth Holmes

Cris Amburgey

Kirsten Dahlquist

Rochelle Karlsen

Augustine Lujan

Jim Manlove

Robert Ellis

Melisa Wight

Nicola D'Anella

Vision

Kitsap County shall be a caring, supportive, and safe community for all its citizens—a community which values each individual, celebrates individual differences, and recognizes the importance of each person's contribution.

Mission

The mission of the Kitsap County Council for Human Rights is twofold:
1) To advise county government and Kitsap County residents on issues related to discrimination, violence and harassment based on race or national origin, religion, age, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or economic status;
2) Promote the equitable treatment of all citizens and reduce prejudice through education, resource referrals, and advocacy.

Board of County Commissioners

Christine Rolfes

Charlotte Garrido

Katherine Walters



The [Kitsap County Council for Human Rights](#) is comprised of residents of Kitsap County appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to 1) advise county government and the Kitsap County community on issues related to discrimination, violence, and harassment based on race or national origin, religion, age, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or economic status, and 2) to promote equitable treatment of all people and reduce prejudice through education, resource referrals, and advocacy.

With this mission as our directive, and with the existence of [state](#) and [federal](#) laws that require that all community members have access to an educational environment free of discrimination, the members of the Kitsap County Council for Human Rights stand with and support students who have experienced harassment related to gender diversity within Central Kitsap schools.

These incidents are all the more concerning in light of the rising discrimination and [anti-LGBTQ+ legislation](#) in other states that directly attack the rights and safety of LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly our gender diverse youth. It appears that these national movements [have bolstered anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment](#) in Kitsap County, again with specific focus on gender diverse youth. Research shows that rejection [negatively impacts LGBTQ+ youth across the board](#), including familial rejection, peer rejection, and community rejection. In contrast, the same report linked above indicates that familial support, peer support, and community support can foster resilience within our LGBTQ+ youth and result in healthier outcomes, a higher sense of belonging, and community growth.

At a recent Board meeting, those perpetrating harassment stated that their recent discriminatory behavior is protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution. The Constitution confers those rights on *all*, including our LGBTQ+ community members, and these rights only persist as long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others.

Per Central Kitsap School District [policy](#), those with diverse gender identities and expressions are a protected class. This statement emphasizes the responsibility of the School District to provide an environment free of bullying and harassment toward *any* student, including gender diverse youth. Bullying and harassment foster an unsafe, disruptive environment within schools, which [directly and negatively impacts](#) the educational outcomes of LGBTQ+ youth. It is crucial that *all* youth feel valued, safe, and free to pursue their education in a secure, caring, and supportive environment. The Kitsap County Council for Human Rights supports the District in ensuring an equitable learning environment in line with District policy.

The Council is dedicated to cultivating a safe and welcoming community that values each individual, celebrates individual differences, and recognizes the importance of each person's contribution. We encourage individuals to utilize resources regarding the status of human rights within Kitsap County, including those on the [Council's website](#).

Respectfully Submitted,

Members of the Kitsap County Council for Human Rights
KitsapCouncilHumanRights@gmail.com

CC: Kitsap County Board of Commissioners
Sarah Albertson, Washington OSPI Department of Equity and Inclusion